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THE MISSION OF WOMAN UNDER THE GOSPEL.

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleopas, and Mary Magdalene.

"When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

"Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."—JOHN XIX. 25-27.

THIS is the record of one of the most instructive and thrilling incidents in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. Unrelated and alone, it is the simple narrative of the dying solicitude of a son for a kind and dependent parent. But clothed with the drapery of those sublime events which environed the cross of Calvary, it glows with divine beauty and majesty; it becomes voiceful and authoritative for every child of Adam who hangs his immortal hopes on that cross.

This event occurred at this world's historical and moral meridian; at that fulness of time, of which prophets wrote and poets sung; that glorious advent of light and hope and salvation, for which kings legislated and good men prayed; but

"Which kings and prophets waited for,
And sought, but never found."

Four thousand dark and gloomy years of human history had rolled away. Generation after generation had swept across this narrow earth to a doubtful destiny. Revolution after revolution had changed the face of society. The whole world had sighed and cried under the burden of human misery, with no hope of relief! Every experiment of self-emancipation and improvement which long life, family attachment, political policy and

cultivated intellect could devise, had been thoroughly tried, and signally failed. The world groaned on, bleeding, rent, and wretched, till the Star of Bethlehem lighted it to the only source of help and salvation. Human influences had approached a grand crisis. Social institutions seemed to be worn out, and ready to vanish away. The old structure seemed tottering on its rotten foundations, and ready to crush all who trusted themselves to its protection. Men were every where dissatisfied with their religions, hailing every one that cried "Lo here" or "Lo there," looking in despair for some trustful guide in the thickening gloom.

The lines of ancient prophecy began to converge to a point. New expectation and promise were awakened. That point gathered brightness like the morning dawn, till a blazing sun arose, heralded by the day-star that directed the Eastern Magi to Jerusalem. That child was born who was to be called "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!"

The Saviour of the world had almost accomplished his wondrous mission. He was just about to offer that "one sacrifice," by which he hath "perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

It was high noon in Judea. The holy city slept in the calm brightness of a tropical springtime. Its eager population had that day been convulsed with excitement since the early dawn, and their tired passions had lulled to a temporary repose. The morning sun had shone upon the wretched farce of our Saviour's trial. His reckless condemnation and cruel crucifixion quickly followed. For three dreadful hours already had the Son of God hung naked and shelterless upon a barbarous cross without the gate. Petrified with astonishment and grief, his few friends were gazing upon that strange, sad spectacle—a helpless, silent, suffering God! There he hangs before the sun, stretched on the fatal wood, writhing, gasping, fainting! They look to see him die! His work is done; his sufferings almost ended! "Will he speak again?" ask the terrified women at the foot of the cross. "Oh! will he not give us one parting look—one dying counsel—one more blessed communication from the very confines of that immortal state which he has brought to light?"

Yes! despairing disciples, once more he will speak; his very last instruction for a waiting world is yet to fall from his lips! Behold, once more his eyes are opening; they beam with dying brilliancy and compassion; they are fixed on his human mother and upon his dearest disciple. His quivering lips begin to move; hearken! "Woman, behold thy son! Disciple, behold thy mother!" Lo, the bright sun is suddenly eclipsed! Noon-day is shrouded in utter night! The heavens put on deep sackcloth! Animated nature is arrested in its meridian activity. A silent, thoughtful, astonished *world* pauses, while the Son of God expires!

After such a scene as this, who can doubt the propriety of assigning females a high rank in all our Christian regards? We are accustomed to attach a sacred value to the dying counsels of a friend. There is something solemn, almost divine, in the faint whisperings that echo back to us from the confines of another world. We bend our ears reverently to catch the latest accents that come up from the dim valley of death, as our friends lose themselves in its impenetrable darkness. Oh! what veneration and solemn authority should be attached to the dying words of the Son of God!

He had revealed great and precious truths, reaching up to the Throne of God, and on to an endless Future, and grasping the inconceivable destinies of Immortality! During his last Passover he had unbosomed himself to his disciples, and introduced them to some of the deep mysteries of godliness. He was with them alone, and during several swift, precious hours, he conversed with them as companions and brethren—instructing, warning, and encouraging them—girding their souls for their baptism of suffering. His omniscient eye swept down the stream of human events, and fastened upon all his disciples, and he uttered glorious promises for them all.

In Gethsemane he was with them also alone. Midnight had thrown its solemn pall over that slumbering Olivet; but *He* could not rest. His own crushing sorrows absorbed his attention, and he could only utter the significant warning, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." These thrilling instructions possess to every mind sublimer sacredness, in consequence of the touching *circumstances* under which they were uttered. But the words of our text fell from the lips of our Saviour at the *most* awful moment of his earthly career. The iniquities of a world hung on his soul; the agonies of crucifixion racked his body; the bitterness of death began to be tasted, and the shadow of its cold wings rested upon his bosom. A sympathizing cloud eclipsed the light of mid-day, and a darker hiding-place had concealed the radiance of his Father's smiles. In *that* hour of pain and dread and crushing sorrow, he turned a benignant smile upon his *mother*, and made provision for her temporal necessities! This was the crowning act of his natural life. The *last words* which Jesus Christ, as a man, ever addressed to mortals, were employed to *bless and honor a woman*! It was an act full of instruction and authority for all his disciples. It has set the seal of his religion for ever upon female elevation, protection, and pious regard.

Alas! that an apology should ever be necessary for treating half the race as rational creatures. But so it is. During nearly the whole of human history, the female sex has been placed in a *adly* false position. Tyrannized over as slaves in all barbarous communities; subjected to humiliation, caprice, and all name-

less miseries, wherever polygamy has prevailed ; degraded to an inferior rank, and compelled to minister to the sordid pleasures of *man*, during every phase of Oriental civilization ; idolized as a toy, or clothed with the unreal and super-human qualities of romance by the chivalry of Europe ; females have hardly yet attained their proper rank and influence as Christian companions and helpers in every good work.

The elevation and influence of woman is the exact measure of Christian civilization, and of human advancement. Whatever may serve to indicate her destiny, and furnish any stimulant to her improvement, should possess deep interest to every friend of God and lover of his race.

It will be the simple object of this discourse to discuss **THE CLAIMS OF CHRISTIANITY UPON FEMALES, and THEIR RANK AND MISSION UNDER THE GOSPEL.**

I. *Females owe their ELEVATION and COMFORT entirely to the Christian religion.* This fact, whenever it is apprehended, must present the claim of *gratitude* in all its breadth and distinctness.

What might have been the exact relation of the sexes to each other if the race had never sinned, it is not very easy to determine. The paradisiacal history of man is too meagre to furnish any certain data. Our great epic poet has drawn a delightful picture of that blessed experience ; but he has evidently borrowed his tintings from the history of a *fallen* world.* It is true, the first human pair wore the image of their glorious Maker :

—“ Both
Not equal, as their sex not equal, seemed :
For contemplation *he*, and valor formed ;
For softness *she*, and sweet attractive grace.
He for God only ; she for God in him :
His fair large front, and eye sublime, declared
Absolute rule.
She, as a veil down to her slender waist,
Her unadorned, golden tresses wore
Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved,
As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
Subjection ; but required with gentle sway,
And by *her* yielded ; by *him* best received.”

There are probably no sexes among other orders of intelligent beings ; and this marked earthly distinction seems not to be recognized in our immortal condition. “ In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage.” The “ hundred and forty-four thousand ” whom John saw standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion were “ virgins ; ” but they had been redeemed from the earth, and are, in the record itself, of the masculine gender. In this apostate and trial world, woman has been placed in *subjection* to the other sex ; of this there can be no doubt. The law is perfectly explicit. The words of the original curse were, “ Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he *shall* rule over

thee." The apostle Paul, enforcing this law, gives four reasons why women should be in subjection :

1. "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man."

2. "Neither was the man created *for* the woman, but the woman for the man."

3. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve."

4. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

"Three of these reasons," it has been justly said, "were in full force before she sinned; therefore, what they were adduced to prove, namely, her *subjection*, must have been in force before the fall." The conclusion is inevitable. "The grounds and reasons of her subjection are drawn from the manner of her creation, and lie in the very *nature* of woman, as distinguished from man." The *fact* itself, sustained by both nature and revelation, has been uniform and conspicuous during the whole of human history. The authorized subjection of woman, like every other Divine arrangement, has been shockingly abused; and ages of gloom and sorrow, for the female race, have dragged through their weary cycles. Reckless violence soon succeeded the expulsion from Paradise. Cain, the first-born of our fallen parents, became a cold-blooded fratricide, and his descendants, for many ages, dissolute and lawless sinners. Polygamy was soon introduced, and female oppression became almost universal.

The writer of the Pentateuch has preserved a fragment of antediluvian poetry, which sheds melancholy light upon the manners of men and the condition of females in the fifth generation of our race :

"Hear my voice, ye wives of Lamech,
Hearken unto my speech !
I have slain a man to my wounding,
And a young man to my hurt :
If Cain shall be avenged seven fold,
Truly Lamech seventy-and-seven fold."

This glimpse of social life in that age, incidentally given, reveals to us polygamy, female oppression, and social violence as common on the earth.

This universal oppression of woman was but partially relieved during the continuance of the patriarchal age and institutions. Religious feelings were all feeble; religious truth was choked by that powerful Oriental influence by which it was surrounded. The stamp of antediluvian wickedness, and the recklessness of those rebels who built the tower of Babel, seem to have impressed themselves upon Asiatic civilization in all ages. In all that protracted and unparalleled corruption woman has ever been the greatest sufferer. Even yet she has never attained to her proper dignity and privileges in any of those storied lands. Still the true religion has shed the only light that gilds the page

of her history through all the dark ages of the past. Its tendency has ever been to counteract that universal oppression and tyranny of which woman has been the victim.

Previous to the Incarnation, the general expectation of a Messiah exerted a silent but powerful influence upon the condition of females. Before man was driven from Paradise, that promise was uttered, around which have clustered the hopes of the world, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." That promise was ever the polar star to the ancient pilgrims, in all their wanderings upon a sin-cursed earth. The memory and tradition of Eden must have deepened the gloom which rested upon all human allotments. The violence and bloodshed which soon filled the earth was an awful demonstration of that wretched estate into which mankind had fallen. But a Deliverer was promised. Dimly indeed, but gratefully, that promise streamed across the heaving surges of sin and misery, like the steady harbor lights to the storm-tossed mariner! Every mother might hope to be the parent of the predicted Saviour, who should make the earth another Eden, and restore the lost bliss of Paradise! "*I have gotten THE MAN from the Lord,*" was the exclamation of parental anxiety, as the *first* mother clasped to her bosom the *first human child*! But alas! Cain became an outcast and a vagabond. The hopes which had clustered about him so brilliantly were all darkened and lost. But that great disappointment directed the expectation of the race to some *other* child yet to be born, as the Saviour of the world! Every household might anticipate that within its precincts, perchance, would be found the Redeemer of mankind! Such an expectation tended to dignify marriage, and shed a sacredness around the character of mothers which would soften the tyrannical spirit of man. It would elevate the tone of self-respect in woman, and inspire a sentiment akin to reverence in the stern and selfish breast of her acknowledged lord.

Such a tendency was very apparent in Jewish society. But that dispensation was only *preparatory*. It did not complete the emancipation of woman.

The Mosaic view of the relation between the sexes yet needed the finishing touch of the Great Teacher. That perfection the gospel supplies. Jesus Christ warmly espoused the cause of females. He asserted the Divine origin of wedlock, and taught that its severance could not lawfully be the work of man. The much-abused facility of *divorce*, which had subjected wives to the cruel caprices of their husbands, he restricted to *one* single cause. He mingled familiarly with the warm-hearted daughters of Israel, and by the purity of his life, the elevation of his doctrines, and the depth of his regard for them, won their confidence and sincere affection. This was a new spectacle on earth! The Saviour delayed his waiting meal, on the margin of Jacob's

well, to converse with a Samaritan woman, and direct her and her estranged countrymen to the only fountain of living waters. He received the particular attentions of a woman who had been a sinner and an outcast, at the house of a Pharisee in Capernaum, because he saw the tear of penitence in her eye, and experienced the work of faith at her hands. "Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee," was her heavenly benediction. He healed the daughter of a heathen mother from the costs of Tyre and Sidon, because of her unshaken faith in him, though his mission was only to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." He pitied and forgave a frail fair one at Jerusalem, when he had given her time for reflection, and doubtless felt assured that she would obey his benevolent injunction: "Go and sin no more." The traitor Judas was sternly rebuked for his murmuring against the gentle Mary, because, at the supper in Bethany, she had anointed the feet of the Saviour with most precious ointment. "She hath done what she could," was her excuse and her glory!

With views so exalted and affections so tender, it is not strange that the Saviour won the warm and gentle hearts of Jewish women, and bound to his cause such a band of faithful and high-minded females. Nowhere can be produced such female portraits as adorn the pages of the Bible. Such scenes of domestic loveliness, such pictures of womanly beauty, are not to be found in all the checkered history of the past. Jesus Christ opened a new and brilliant career to the female race.

The influence of Christianity, developing those emotions and exalting those spiritual endowments in which women especially excel, has wrought a decided change in the sentiments of the world. Under the gospel, woman is a "new creature," by her birthright. That birthright is glorious! It does not consist in that vague and distant *adoration* produced in Papal countries by the worship of the Virgin Mary, nor in that extravagant and romantic *gallantry* which was conspicuous in the early Teutonic races, and which gave birth to the institutions of chivalry in the middle ages. But it embraces the intelligent companionship of man, his sympathy and confidence in the female, as a Heaven-sent help-meet in every good and great undertaking. Christianity has begotten, in the purest and mightiest of men, a *want* of such companionship and sympathy; and it is the noblest mission of woman to supply that want!

But a chosen associate of man, a confidential adviser, a sympathizing friend you cannot find her, except under the benign influence of the Christian religion. Look over the world at this moment, my female friends; fix your eyes upon the whole sisterhood of your sex; and nowhere except among Christian nations, except where the gospel has been sincerely embraced, will you find woman arising to her proper dignity, and exerting

her legitimate influence! That station is not that of a *slave* or a *goddess*; not a mere *drudge* nor a *gilded plaything*! The Papal idolatry might cause you to be *deified*; the war-like spirit, which has appropriated the remnants of chivalry, would make you a *toy*; but pure Christianity would make you an every-day companion, and intrust you with blessed agencies of usefulness, and send you out as ministering angels, to alleviate the misery, dissipate the gloom, and bind up the sorrows of this suffering world! Such only you aspire to become; such only any right-minded female would consent to remain; and such practical Christianity would make you. You owe to it, therefore, a debt of *gratitude*, which you can repay only by sincerely embracing the gospel, and giving yourselves up to its high and solemn duties. Infidelity or levity, in a female, with regard to the Christian religion, is a *sin against the sex* which deserves the stamp of dishonor. Female elevation, protection, and comfort, all proceed directly from the gospel. The obligations of *gratitude*, the bonds of *self-interest*, as well as the claims of *duty*, should bind every female to Jesus Christ, in a willing and faithful devotion.

II. *The moral character of the community is to be decided by its female members.* This fact presents the claim of *deep responsibility* to every female. Let *man* glory in his intelligence and authority; admit that he may outreason and overpower the woman; yet his *moral* influence will certainly yield to hers. This fact, if it can be established, carries with it a fearful responsibility. The proof of it should be pondered carefully and seriously, especially by the female.

It is an unquestioned fact, in the history of Christendom, that women are *more religious* than men. Many more women than men actually embrace the gospel.

Woman submits to God more readily than man. Her earthly nature is weaker, her passions interpose a feebler obstacle, and that subjection to man which God has authorized, prepares her to submit more readily to the biddings of Divine authority. She makes higher attainments in the religious life. She is free from many hindrances that influence man. Removed from the cares and excitements of the world, relieved from the pursuits of perplexing business, she is left more free to grasp spiritual truth, and be moulded into the Divine likeness. She has usually more time for reflection; her nature is more susceptible, her feelings more tender, and her whole soul much more plastic. She has been accustomed to cling to some other support, and the tendrils of her heart all go out after some appropriate object of love and confidence. When she attaches herself to the Saviour, it is commonly with a strength of affection to which the other sex are strangers.

These explanations may or may not be satisfactory, but the superior religious attainment of females, as a class, is a con-

spicuous fact. This superiority always makes itself felt in social life. In almost every community of the sexes moral character is determined by the females. This is true of the *family, the church, and the world.*

1. In the marriage relation, it is a common observation that the parties are greatly assimilated, often moulded into the same pattern, in intelligence, in disposition, in moral character, and sometimes, it is averred, even in appearance. But in this blending of qualities one law prevails: *the MORAL qualities of the female predominate—the intellectual traits of the male.* This is the general truth, established by extensive observation. Let each one test its correctness by his own experience. Look over the circle of your acquaintance, recall all the instances in which your friends are “unequally yoked together” in the marriage bond. Unless your experience is peculiar, you will find the Christian man with an unbelieving, worldly-minded, or frivolous wife, soon dragged down by her to a most stunted moral growth; while some of the brightest ornaments of the church are its females who have been opposed and even *persecuted* by ungodly husbands! As this is an appeal to experience, each one must construct the argument for himself.

The testimony of history is equally conclusive. Here and there a man of extraordinary attainments may rise above the worldly and distracting influence of a wicked wife, and maintain a high Christian character; but this is an exception to a very general rule, and the exceptions are so rare that it establishes the principle. The first great apostasy on earth arose from the “sons of God” taking themselves wives of the fair “daughters of men.” Solomon was led far astray by his heathen wives. Ahab became a monster in Israel, through the instigation of that gifted and wicked Phœnician woman, Jezebel, who had become his wife. Their talented daughter also, Athaliah, nearly ruined the character of the amiable Jehoram, king of Israel.

These are specimens of the sad influence of irreligious wives upon the husband and family. The same exhibitions of character in the husband, for obvious reasons, would be far less injurious. In the family, moral character is determined by the wife and mother.

2. In the church, the moral character of the *sisters* determines the tone of feeling, the real effective usefulness of the members. This also is a *fact* established by common observation. If the female members of any church are active, faithful, self-denying, and prayerful, there will be a good state of religious interest and influence. But if the sisters are worldly and frivolous, indifferent and selfish, the most abundant and faithful labors of the brethren will be greatly neutralized and counteracted. The females generally decide the extent and efficiency of Christian feeling in any church. Without their pure example, ardent

prayers, and warm-hearted coöperation, no church can enjoy a high degree of permanent prosperity.

3. The same is true of larger communities. They generally receive their moral character from their female members. However much the pride and supremacy of man may revolt at it, however much he may surpass the other sex in practical wisdom, and business ability, and worldly influence, *in morals* he will be moulded by them, willingly it could be hoped, to their own generally purer and better pattern. But better or worse, their moral stamp will almost always prevail. Our appeal here, also, is to experience. Point out a community where the *females* are uneducated, frivolous, weak, and wicked, and it may be fearlessly asserted, there the manners and morals of the *men* will be low and debased. Let the females any where be intelligent and high-minded, high-principled and sincerely pious, and there vulgar and vicious men will either be scarce or lose their influence. Such female society not seldom exerts a vast redeeming power upon the other sex, even under great disadvantages!

This fact invests the character of woman with sublime interest, and casts upon her almost fearful responsibility. If she understood her power, and would fulfil her high mission, she could nearly control the *moral* movements of society. Vice, in some of its forms, owes its very *being* to her permission. Intemperance, for example, much of it, would be cut off at the fountain-head if the united female community should declare against it. Fashionable drinking is known to be the magic well-spring from which flow its deepest and deadliest streams. If ladies, young and old, would sternly discountenance such drinking, and dry up this fountain, much of the evil would be removed. So of all forms of dissipation. So long as they do not disqualify men for respectable female society, they will be practised and be popular! Whenever females choose to lay the ban upon them, they will disappear from the better portions of the community, and gradually die out of the world! How soon would dancing and midnight carousals be given up, if no respectable female should ever participate in them? But who needs to be told that these fashionable revels are the flowery gateways to nearly all the dissoluteness in society? In them the animal passions are strengthened, the foulest plots against domestic peace and purity begotten and nursed! There, appetites are created which other and sadder scenes alone can satisfy! Oh! can those who *give* such entertainments, or grace them with their presence, escape the responsibility of that distant mischief to which they are introductory? If pure-minded females could know the full consummation of that moral evil to which they innocently or carelessly lend their charms, they would be far more cautious of their influence. They carry with them a fearful

moral power! They must bless or curse the community in which they dwell; for whatever strikes at social morality touches the vitality, the deepest welfare of mankind.

When we survey the character of nations, we find the influence of females equally conspicuous. The elevating influence of Christianity upon the female character has already been mentioned. That elevation is generally a correct measurement of true Christian principle in the community. But this influence is clearly *reciprocal*. Christianity has not only elevated female character, but female piety has greatly exalted the character of nations. This argument can only be *indicated* here. It is too extensive to be expanded in a single discourse.

The reciprocal influence of female elevation upon public virtue is seen even in pagan nations. Wherever females have held the highest rank, there sentiments have prevailed most nearly resembling Christian virtue. Sparta was conspicuous among the states of ancient Greece for severity, resolution, and perseverance, virtues highly prized in a warlike age; but Spartan *women* were as famous for their heroism as Spartan soldiers. The ancient Romans were certainly signalized by lofty courage, noble endurance, and magnanimous love of country; and Roman *women* also arose to the highest rank, and left behind them the brightest examples of pagan virtue. The early Teutonic tribes, the aborigines of central Europe, were distinguished for their veneration of the female sex. It was a wild, fierce worship of woman, to this day utterly inexplicable. It was a genial, sacred fire, brought with them from Asia, and probably kindled by some spark from a Hebrew altar. It shed a grateful but solitary light upon the dark waste of female history; but it produced legitimate and abundant fruits. The private virtue, temperance, and indomitable energy of the Teutonic race find in this fact their fullest explanation.

This national veneration for woman, coming into contact with the mystical Christianity of the middle ages, gave birth to Chivalry. That strange institution, commingling so much that was sublime with so much that was ridiculous, was really a *perversion* of the early Teutonic spirit. Yet the females who had been the objects of this singular veneration, upon their embrace of Christianity, made higher attainments than their sisters around them, whose social position had been less favorable. And reciprocally, this higher female character and position reacted most favorably upon national virtue. The German, Scandinavian, and English nations have chiefly inherited what remains of the old Teutonic spirit, and among them preëminently flourish the *Protestant religion, institutions of learning, and free government!*

History and experience unite in establishing the truth, that in the Family, the Church, and the Nation, the moral character of the community is decided by the *female members*. This fact, so often illustrated in the providence of God, casts a fearful respon-

sibility upon the conduct of woman. It gives her *influence* enough to satisfy the broadest benevolence and the best ambition. She need not sigh for other posts of power and trust. She need not mingle in the marts of business, nor lift up her voice in the scenes of stormy debate. She can afford to abandon the bench, the rostrum, and the pulpit to her sterner brethren. She may yield to that divinely appointed subjection to man, without any dishonor or regret. She has still left her the noble, responsible, sublime prerogative of *giving moral character to the community; of winning, moulding, swaying the religious sentiments and emotions of mankind!* She acts decisively upon the immortal destinies of men; and woe be to her, and woe be to the world, if she forget or abuse that fearful trust!

Let it be left to those females who have *rejected* the gospel of Christ, or embraced destructive errors, to clamor for "*woman's rights*," and pant to overleap the barriers which God's providence and human propriety have erected about them. They have thrown away the true sceptre of their power, and it is not strange that they chafe under a divinely appointed *subjection* which they cannot cast off. Let them embrace the true religion, and they will cease to obtrude themselves into positions for which the God of nature never designed them. They will be content to sway the mightiest and most enduring influence that is exerted on earth; to perform the nobler ministrations of giving moral tone to the community, and pointing lost souls to the Lamb of God! When prouder ambitions take possession of the female bosom, and she burns to exhibit herself in histrionic, forensic, or political efforts, under the banner of humanity or religion, her *principles* or her *sense* may well be suspected. This is *not* her true mission. She has a loftier sphere of activity, and may reap richer fruits than these.

III. *Christian females may do much good in the world.* The religion of Christ presents to them also the claim of *blessed hope*. They have not to rely, for their aspirations and activities, solely upon the slow stimulant of gratitude for what religion has made them; neither upon the stringent appeals of conscience, arraying before them the vast responsibility of giving moral character to the community. They may have also the more welcome inducement of *great anticipated usefulness*.

The true position of woman under the gospel has already been stated. She should not covet that exaggerated and blind adulation which characterized the times of chivalry. She should not consent to receive that empty and frivolous gallantry which the chivalric spirit has left behind it, and which is far too common in modern times. Her position is far higher than this. It has been justly said of her, that "it is only by observing the proper medium between *servitude* and *deification*; by treating the sex as *women*, not as slaves or as goddesses; by cultivating their minds and

hearts, as well as adorning them with graceful accomplishments, that we can restore this part of our race to their just rights and duties."

The progress of modern civilization is making decisive changes in the external condition of women. The time has been, when their noblest vocation was to ply the distaff and the loom. The heroines of Homer knew no higher employment. Queens, princesses, and noble ladies, gloried in such handicraft. Even nymphs and goddesses, in the estimation of the ancient poets, were not dishonored by such occupations. When Mercury was dispatched to the island and grot of Calypso, he found the beautiful immortal at work :

"While she with work and song the time divides,
And through the loom the golden shuttle guides."

Even the stern daughter of Jupiter, we are told, wore a veil "her hand had finely wove." Until quite recently, many processes of industry were carried on in the *family* which the progress of the arts has now transferred to other spheres. Machinery has banished almost all kinds of manufacturing from the household to the workshop, and left a large class of females at comparative leisure.

This is an auspicious change in the destiny of woman. Henceforth she is to be relieved from many of the toils and solitudes which have pressed upon the sex in other ages. But what will be the probable *result* upon the character of females? What will they do with their superfluous time? What new direction will their energies take? These are questions to which intelligent women must give a practical answer. It may possibly convert them into fine ladies, "self-dressing automata," yawning, sighing, sentimental devourers of fiction, finished "busy-bodies," having no work of their own, but industriously doing that of other people. Unless they have ample resources in their own minds, or some worthy enterprises on which to pour their stagnant energies, they will almost certainly seek the scenes of dissipation and frivolous amusement; they will become unstable, "heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

Self-preservation demands that they seek out new spheres of usefulness. Thrown much more than formerly upon their own resources, they are in danger of allowing life to stagnate in sluggish inaction, or to be frittered away with no worthy results!

But this disaster need not be perpetrated. There are, all about American females, spheres of the noblest activity. There are demands upon their time and resources of the most exalted and hopeful kind. As companions, sisters, wives, mothers, and teachers, unmeasured influence and usefulness are open to them all. I cannot dwell upon the mission of woman in any of these relations. The bare mention of them will awaken in every intelligent female mind a train of thrilling associations, and suggest a host of diffi-

cult and responsible duties. In the family and the community, as associates and friends, there should flow forth from every female a purifying, elevating, and restraining influence. *Her* smile should be the light, and her high instincts the law of social life. About *her* orbit there should be a perpetual halo of beauty and joy, which the other sex will delight to preserve and to share.

As *wives* and *mothers*, females undoubtedly enter upon their sublimest duties. Around the fireside, glowing with conjugal and maternal affection, beautifying and blessing the household, and illuminating every dark hour with the light of undying hope, she fulfils her noblest earthly mission. The obscure and trying position of a mother possesses a moral grandeur unsurpassed by that of any earthly allotment. The fearful problem of an immortal being is propounded to her in every new-born infant. The germ of an angel's bliss or a devil's woe is committed to her decisive nurture. A plastic *soul*, with capacities allied to seraphs, and a duration parallel with the endless years of Jehovah's existence, is put into her hands. The mould she forms will shape the immortal features of that spirit. The moral life she lives will imbreathe its deathless activities and emotions. A spark of immortality has been kindled on her hearth-stone; and whether it shall glow with a pure radiance until it shall rival the brightness of the firmament, and be set to shine as a star in the new heaven wherein dwelleth righteousness, or kindle the noxious gases of human corruption till it shall set on fire the course of nature, and be itself set on fire of hell, will depend mainly upon the stimulants applied to it by that mother. How responsible the duty, how exalted the ministration, to guide one such towering spirit to the clear sunlight of truth, till it shall lose itself in the blazing firmament of heaven's own brightness! *Mother* of that little bud of eventful destinies, of that mysterious and immortal soul, can you conceive of a loftier vocation than to guard the opening flower and ripening fruit, and train it to bloom in the paradise of God?

In our country, the sphere of *instructors of the young* opens with rich promise, and presents high inducements to every educated female.

There is no more obvious social necessity in this country, than that the masses are to be *educated*. It *must* be done, or we are ruined, politically and socially. The swelling ranks of our population are increasing faster than any conservative influence can be brought to bear upon them. Ignorance, the parent of infinite mischief, is stalking abroad in all our new settlements, and who will fly to the rescue? Commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, so rapidly expanding, seem to require all the men; and who will become the educators for the masses? It is a growing conviction of our wisest political economists and philanthropists, that our country must depend much on her **FEMALES** for this indis-

ispensable and important work. The God of nature has endowed them with peculiar qualifications for this great enterprise. They have a natural tact, patience, and enthusiasm, which are indispensable to success. They have, in general, a purity of character, a warmth of affection, and winning manners, which enable them to calm the turbulence of passion, to attract the wayward and perverse to the pleasantness of wisdom's ways, and to lead the wandering and the lost back to virtue, and up to the excellence of purity and Christian faith. Here is a wide and inviting field, into which females may enter and reap a glorious harvest. The movements of Providence, in this land, point to it as one of the noblest labors open to American women.

But whatever may be the *relation* by which females may choose to link themselves to the welfare of our race, a thousand walks of usefulness are open to their feet. This is a world of want and wretchedness. The ignorant are to be taught, the exposed to be rescued and saved, and the suffering relieved. The Christian woman is summoned to activity by the largest promises of usefulness. She may gather neglected youth into the Sabbath-school, and with the blessing of God place their erring feet in the high road to heaven. She may seek out the sick and suffering poor, and bear to them the charities of the church, and the richer charity of her own personal sympathy and kindness. She may go from house to house with the messages of divine truth, and, with a touching persuasion which she alone can use, point dying sinners to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. All these, with numberless other instrumentalities, are within her reach. If she leads a sluggish life, she must repudiate the claims of blessed hope, and stupefy her sensibilities to all its noblest stimulants. Wide and elevated spheres of usefulness open to her on every hand.

But need you be reminded, Christian sisters, that for the discharge of these sublime duties, for the accomplishment of this exalted good, you will need *sincere* and *warm-hearted* piety? A *formal* religion will not suffice. You *owe* to the Author of Christianity a willing and hearty embrace of his cause. Your solemn responsibilities can never be met by any thing short of this; and nothing else will render you truly useful and blessed in your generation.

Consider, again, that you must give tone to religious *feeling* in the circle where you move; that your moral likeness will live after you, reproduced in those with whom you come into contact. To discharge this solemn trust, you will need to make earnest efforts. To meet the manifest demand for your high attainment in piety, you must employ choice and peculiar means of spiritual improvement, till the fire of your zeal shall *flame*, and the stream of your moral influence, so deep and mighty, shall be a stream of salvation.

Place your high aims distinctly before you, and dwell upon the magnitude of your responsibility, and the sublimity of your mission. Covet to occupy your true place in a Christian community. In your self-culture and activities, ever have in view the solemn fact that you are to decide the moral character of the community, and stamp your own likeness in imperishable traces on countless hearts around you. Link yourselves wisely, but resolutely, to the welfare of your race, and prepare to leave along the path of your earthly pilgrimage good fruit, and fragrant flowers, and charming melody, to gladden the steps of your chafed and wearied brothers, who shall rise up and call you blessed.

SERMON DLXXIX.

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THE HAPPINESS OF THE PIOUS.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom."—Prov. III. 13.

It is common among men to judge of the weight of any sentiment by the character of him who utters it. If we apply this rule to our text, we shall see abundant reason for adopting it as a most certain and valuable truth. It was pronounced by Solomon, the man whose name has become another term for wisdom, and it is found in one of those writings which, being composed near the end of his life, are justly considered as containing the last product of his faculties ripened and disciplined by a course of long and varied experience. But more than this: the wise man in this book gives not only the matured result of his own elaborate reflection, but that conclusion to which he was led by the inspiration of the only wise God.

The sentiment of the text, however, claims our careful attention, as well on account of its nature as of its author. It professes to answer one of the most interesting and important inquiries man can make, *how he shall secure his happiness*; an inquiry which every human being is continually engaged in making. David tells us that in his day, the cry of the multitude was, "Who will show us any good?" and in the great state paper of our own country we find the pursuit of happiness mentioned along with life and liberty as one of the dearest rights and possessions

of man. From the child eagerly grasping after the first toy which meets his eye, to the old man trembling on the verge of the grave, every individual is seeking the great boon, happiness. And the ways in which it is sought are almost as various as the parties engaged in the pursuit. Some, differing but little from the brute beasts, find their paradise in sensual gratifications. Miserable beings are they indeed, unworthy to live, and alas ! unfit to die. Others, elevating their views somewhat, make the supreme good to consist in the possession of wealth, or fame, or power. A nobler class labor for it in the pursuits of literature, or science, or the fine arts. A wiser class (we speak, of course, comparatively) place their enjoyment in the cultivation of the social and domestic affections, esteeming all beyond the narrow circle of home and kindred and friends a barren waste, as in truth it too often is.

For each of these views, when regarded in their most favorable light, much may be said. Yet on the whole the testimony of experience is, that they are not satisfactory. Where one has gained his end, hundreds have been miserably disappointed ; and the successful aspirant has generally found that the fruit which dazzled his eye, and which he so eagerly grasped, has turned to ashes in his hand. In the midst of this scene of baffled expectation and blasted hope, how cheering is it to hear an authoritative voice pronouncing the words of the text. You will observe it does not say, *Happy will be*, but "*Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,*" or piety, which are used as convertible terms in the writings of Solomon. It is a great mistake to suppose that the pious man is *only to be* blest ; he is blest already. There is indeed an endless and glorious reversion before him hereafter ; but even here, amid the darkening shadows of this vale of tears, he has the earnest of what is to come ; he enjoys a happiness which is real, pure, and satisfying.

Some of the main causes or elements of this happiness it is our purpose now to set forth.

I. *Peace of conscience.*

The first one we mention is a peaceful conscience ; and this one naturally assumes this priority, because it is first both in time and in importance. There can be no solid comfort while a man is ill at ease respecting his condition before God. Whatever other earthly blessings may crown his lot, this drawback is the one mysterious drop which converts the whole contents of his cup into gall. He is like the wretched Haman, who had all he could desire, and yet the whole availed him nothing while Mordecai sat at the king's gate. The possession of the entire world, with all its honors and pleasures, would be but a mockery to him who feels the lash of an accusing conscience. While on the other hand, to him who is at peace with himself, there is a sweet and ample solace under whatever external evils may befall him.

To him, as has well been said, may be justly applied the vain boast of Horace respecting his just man—that the rage of the multitude, the threatenings of tyrants, the commotions of the elements, nay, the fall of the world itself, could not dismay him. (*Impavidum serient ruinae.*) With an approving conscience, what has he to fear? His tranquillity, as it does not arise out of outward things, so it cannot be affected by their vicissitudes.

This peace, however, is not to be confounded with another state of mind nearly resembling it, but as different, in reality, as possible. There is a sense of security in regard to spiritual and eternal things which springs not from religion, but from the want of it. It has no solid foundation in reason or Scripture, and is destined sooner or later to a fearful overthrow. It results either from infidel or deistical principles, such as that there is no God, or that he will not visit for the conduct of his creatures; or from the power of sinful appetites and passions which shut out all serious thoughts from even momentary consideration; or from false ideas of the mercy of God, such as the persuasion that notwithstanding what he has said, still he will clear the guilty; or again, from men's most erroneous conceptions of their own character, as being by their self-righteousness, or by their antinomian faith, freed from any danger of incurring the Divine wrath. Now, the security thus produced is the consequence of ignorance and insensibility. It is that of a man who walks without fear on the verge of a tremendous precipice, because he is blind. It is the natural state of a darkened, hardened, or seared conscience.

How different the peace of the children of God! It is intelligent, and well-grounded, and Scriptural. It admits the existence of sin and punishment, of death and of hell. Truly pious men generally have profounder impressions of these realities than any others. They bow in humble acknowledgment of the Divine justice, feeling that their lives and their all are due to its violated claims. But at the same time they look with faith to an all-sufficient Redeemer; and in the merits of his obedience and death they see ample reason for confidence and hope. Having been led to accept from the heart his mediation and atonement, they have assured peace. Why should they not? What is there to disturb the tranquillity? There are, indeed, sin and guilt which cry with loud voices for punishment. But this punishment has been inflicted to the last iota, and now the law is satisfied; justice is satisfied; God is satisfied; their own sense of right is satisfied. What, then, remains to harass the conscience of the sincere believer? He has gone to the bottom of the difficulty between him and his Maker, and he has bridged the chasm so effectually, that it is even stronger than it was before. The lapse of time cannot develop any new facts, or make any stronger impressions than he has already had. Let sin assume its blackest hues, let his unworthiness be revealed in the

most startling form, still neither can surpass the merits of Christ's sacrifice, or the free grace of Him who gave his only-begotten Son, the just for the unjust. Hence, so long as he clings to the cross, and places his simple and exclusive trust in its exalted victim, the penitent sinner has in his conscience a peace which the world cannot give or take away. Happy, therefore, is the man that findeth this wisdom.

II. *The Union of Inclination and Duty.*

One of the most common sources of uneasiness and apprehension among men is the opposition between their views of what is right and their views of what is desirable. There is a course which they know very well they ought to shun, but it is exceedingly agreeable; on the other hand, there is a course which they ought closely to follow, but alas! it is altogether repulsive. And whichever of these ways they take, they are unhappy. If they take the wrong way, the way pleasing to flesh and blood, they have all the time certain twinges of remorse, and even in the midst of the pleasures of sin are painfully conscious that a day of reckoning will come. If, however, they take the right way, and aim to live godly in the world, it is the hardest of all tasks. They have no kind of pleasure in it. Every step of the road is irksome. Nothing but stress of conscience, a stern sense of duty, keeps them from throwing up at once the disagreeable undertaking.

Now, there are in this respect three classes of impenitent persons. One, the smallest, pursues, or strives to pursue, the painful road of rectitude, toiling evermore in the vain struggle against nature. A second and larger class follows the downward path, and gives full swing to corrupt inclinations, although often sadly disturbed by the remonstrances of the inward monitor. The third, and by far the largest class, alternates between the two courses, never giving any decided or permanent predominance to either. But all alike are unhappy. When they do evil, of course they find the way of transgressors is hard; and when they try to do what is good or right, they are disappointed of the pleasure to which they have earned a title. Madame de Sévigné has expressed this with her usual *naïveté*: "I wish very much I could be religious. I belong, at present, neither to God nor the devil; and I find this condition very uncomfortable, though, between you and me, the most natural in the world."

Now, the pious have this characteristic, that they not only, as a general thing, pursue the path of rectitude, but *delight in it* as being not merely their duty, but their choice. Retirement, prayer, study of the Sacred Scriptures, religious conversation, self-denial, are pleasant to them. They have a new spiritual relish, which makes religious duties as attractive to them as books are to a scholar, as parade-day is to a soldier, or as gay amusements are to the children of fashion. Thus a pious

young lady once, on being asked if she considered the worldly engagements and pleasures which she had renounced as being criminal, replied, that really there was no occasion for her to discuss that point, for she had lost all taste for such enjoyments, and whether innocent or not, would not care to engage in them.

And so it is with all genuine believers. I do not say, indeed, that they are never troubled with unlawful desires, or conflicts between impulse and principle; for even the best of Christians are in this world only imperfectly sanctified, and while old Adam lives, he will make himself felt. But, as a general thing, the very things which it is a pious man's duty to do, he loves; and those which it is his duty to avoid, he abhors. And thus the path which to so many seems girt with thorns, is to him strewn with flowers. For, happy is the man that findeth wisdom.

III. *Communion with God.*

The Sacred Scriptures often speak of a fellowship which is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; of an intimate communion which believers have with their covenant God. This subject is eminently of an experimental nature, and one which cannot be made perfectly plain to those who have no heart for spiritual things. Yet is it not mysterious—much less inconceivable or impossible. As mind communes with mind and heart with heart on earth, so may minds and hearts here commune with the Infinite Mind on high. The only difficulty in the way is sin: remove this, and it rests with God alone to say whether or not his creatures below may have the intercourse with him which is enjoyed by the holy beings around his throne. This point he has graciously settled in his own Word. Said Jesus, "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Again, "If any man hear my voice, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." And so in numerous passages of the Old Testament, where God is described as the refuge, the resting-place, the only sufficient portion of believers.

Now it is true this communion is not susceptible of rigid analysis; just as you cannot set down in logical formulas the intercourse of two earthly friends, or the mutual affection of husband and wife. Yet it has an existence just as really and as certainly in one case as in the other. The pious man withdraws from outward and worldly things, and seeks intercourse with his God. He ponders over the revealed page, or he pours out his heart in prayer, or he gives wings to his soul in devout meditation on some truth of the gospel. As he proceeds, the fire burns; and oftentimes in the rapt exercise he loses consciousness of place and time. Whether the season be long or short, he has communed with his God. His own heart has gone out to God in various

emotions and exercises, and God has graciously come down to him. He is as sure that God has been dealing with his soul as was Abraham when he heard the promises, or as Samuel when repeatedly awoke by the voice in the temple. There is nothing fantastic or fanatical in this. Men may call it the dream of a disordered imagination; but it is, in truth, the reality of a sanctified heart, authorized by the Lord's own words, and confirmed by the testimony of his people in all ages. This is what David meant when he said, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."

And who shall tell the joy and peace of the communion thus gotten? It is pure, heavenly, divine. Independent of all earthly circumstances, it is a possession incorruptible and undefiled. The believer may lose all external things, he may be left as destitute as when he first came into the world; but while God continues to be, his chief source of happiness continues unimpaired. The language of his soul is that of Asaph thousands of years since: "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee." And therefore, happy, yes, happy is the man that findeth wisdom.

IV. *Confidence in Providence.*

One of the chief evils of this world is its uncertainty. Its fashion is continually passing away. Houses and lands, fame and honor, friends and relatives—whatever we love or prize, and whether it be intrinsically valuable or not—all are as fleeting as a flower, a bubble, a vapor:

"Like snow-flakes on a river,
One moment white, then gone for ever."

Ages upon ages ago grim experience taught the wise to say, "Call no man happy till he dies." The brightest morning often ends in the very blackness of darkness. The sources of pleasure are turned into sources of misery; and the identical beings or objects which prompted hope, become the instruments of unhappiness. Nor can human wisdom guard against these contingencies. The precautions which answer effectually in one case, are utterly fruitless in another. Sometimes, indeed, the very means used to preclude danger only bring it on more certainly.

Now, amid all these proverbial vicissitudes of this world, there is only one man who can walk with a charmed life, i. e., the wise or pious man. Believing as he does in a Providence which is not blind, but intelligent; not general only, but also particular; not fatalistic on the one hand nor capricious on the other, but sovereign, wise, holy and good; such a man can afford to walk on life's pathway with a light heart and a buoyant step. He knows not, nor does he want to know, what may befall him; but he is sure nothing shall happen to him which is not sent by a

divine hand, which is not wisely and kindly intended, and which shall not, in the end, minister to his eternal blessedness. It matters not what may be before his mind—his business, his property, his reputation, his family or his friends; all are alike under the covenant care of an all-seeing eye, and an all-mighty arm. Let cares like a wild deluge come, and storms of sorrow fall, the Lord of hosts is with him; the God of Jacob is his refuge. Let the heathen rage, and the earth melt, and the foundations be destroyed, he looks serenely up to that Being who rides upon the wings of the wind, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. He knows that all things are in the hand of God. The fire and the flood are but ministers to do his pleasure. The bad passions of men and of devils are under his control, and He can say to either: "Thus far shalt thou come, and no farther." The wrath of man he makes to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restrains.

How happy is the man who has found this wisdom; who can and does thus habitually regard God! How free from care and anxiety his bosom! How peaceful his days, how tranquil his nights! In prosperity he is not elated; in adversity he is not disheartened; but in either calmly rests on the Divine promise as a confiding child on its mother's bosom. And therefore, happy, thrice happy, is the man that findeth wisdom.

V. *The Hope of Heaven.*

As we are concerned with the present and not the future happiness of the believer, I speak not of heaven itself, but of *the hope* of that blessed inheritance—two things which, however closely connected, are yet perfectly distinct in themselves. While, then, the pious man has in this life a number of sources of happiness, pure and solid and satisfying, he has superadded to them all the prospect of an immense and eternal weight of glory in the future life. And this prospect itself is one of the greatest joys conceivable.

"Heaven in reversion, like the sun, as yet
Beneath the horizon, cheers us in this world;
It sheds on souls susceptible of light
The glorious dawn of our eternal day." YOUNG, VIII. 1055.

Hope is often spoken of as the one great blessing of man which survived the ruins of the fall. It is the grand spring of enterprise, the chief incitement to active effort, the main support in misfortune; nor is there any lower deep of distress for him in whose breast hope has expired. He who possesses it is transported from the scene around him to another, fairer and more blissful; and, tasting by anticipation its delights, is raised far beyond his existing circumstances, whether of joy or of sorrow. Prose and poetry have both been tasked to the utmost in setting forth its animating, encouraging, and consolatory influence.

" But if this be its effect when it is only an illusion of fancy, or when, at best, its objects are confined to the narrow bounds of space and time, what must be its power when it takes hold of eternal life, and brings near the glories of the world to come ! Borne aloft upon angels' wings, the soul reaches the very secret of God's presence, and revels there in the contemplation of those joys which are at His right hand, and those pleasures which are for evermore. Nor is its upward flight arrested by any consciousness of uncertainty, or any fear of disappointment. These are left for the children of the world, whose brilliant expectations, indeed, often dazzle only to delude and to destroy. The hope of the Christian, on the contrary, stands like an anchor of the soul, and never makes ashamed. It is based upon the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ ; it is inspired by the Holy Spirit of truth and grace, and it is confirmed by every day's progress in the service and knowledge of God. The earnest of its glorious objects is already experienced in this world, the believer's present exercises being " a well of living water springing up unto everlasting life." Having, then, in addition to other joys of the most substantial character, a hope so exalted in its nature, and so immovable in its foundation, there is nothing wanting to the completion of the Christian's blessed lot. If any thing be true, it is this : " Happy is the man that findeth wisdom."

There is, however, an objection sometimes offered to this statement. " If this be so," it is said, " then Christians ought to be distinguished by a uniform sense of contentment and peace ; they should be the happiest of mortals : whereas frequently the reverse of this is the case." The objection is fair, and we propose to answer it fairly. First, then, all professed Christians are not such in reality ; and, of course, it is no wonder that nominal believers should have only nominal joy. Man may make a wax flower exactly resembling the production of Nature, but only a simpleton would expect from it the fragrance of God's own handiwork. But, secondly, many real children of God are constitutionally of a gloomy or desponding temperament. This is a part of their physical nature, and will cleave to them until the soul drops its earthly clogs, and soars on high. While, therefore, they may have grace in lively exercise, they will not have the evidence of grace ; while they may have abundant reason to rejoice and be glad, they will rather be a prey to anxious forebodings. But as piety does not pretend to change the outward man, these sporadic cases are no objection to the general truth we have laid down. But, thirdly, a great many, of whom we may hope that the root of the matter is in them, feel and show but little of the happiness we have spoken of, because of their weak faith and careless living. God, of course, will not smile upon his disobedient children. If they set their affections upon any

other than Him, they must needs lose the light of his countenance : just as, if we hold up a dark body between us and the sun, we cannot but be in the shade. So if faith languishes, joy will languish in like measure. The most beautiful landscape conveys no pleasure to the man who does not see it. The largest promises mean nothing to him who does not know or believe that he has some title to them. And hence the disquietude of many of whom it would be harsh to say they had no interest in Christ. Whatever real happiness they have, is because they have a spark of grace ; whatever they lack, is because they have *only* a spark.

I submit, then, the objection is fully met. Apart from these cases, it is, it has been, it will be ever true : " Happy is the man that findeth wisdom." Never has a really godly person, of an ordinarily cheerful temperament, walked close with God without being happy. Ransack the history of the world, and you will find no such case. Catechise every soul now living in Christendom, and you will find no such case.

My impenitent hearer, you want happiness, and you know where to obtain it. Let me now earnestly entreat you to seek it at once. It is not true that all religion's blessings lie beyond the grave. Oh ! no ; they are here ; they lie around you ; they await your extended arm. Godliness has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. Like the man in the parable then, sell all that you have and buy the field which has this pearl of great price. Then life will flow on in pure and tranquil pleasures ; mercies will acquire a sweeter relish ; afflictions will lose half their bitterness ; death will be divested of its terrors ; the present will be the seed-time of grace, the future, the harvest of glory ; and in short, you will " enjoy God in every thing, and every thing in God."